

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7866

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ENRG
SUBJECT: SAUDI DEMAND FOR ROK STATEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST

REF: A) STATE 229437 B) SEOUL 7864

1. ACTING FORIEGN MINISTER YUN SUK HEUN INFORMED ME ROKG HAS BEEN TOLD BY SAUDI VICE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN UNFAIRS THAT ROK WILL BE DECLARED A HOSTILE STATE BY ARABS AND OIL CUT-OFF UNLESS DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF ARAB POSITION MADE. ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AT UP-COMING ARAB SUMIT ACCORDING TO YUN'S INFORMATION.

2. YUN SAID ROKG APPRECIATES THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE U.S. IN COUNSELLING AGAINST GIVING IN TO ARAB DEMANDS. HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF U.S., ALL THE BIG POWERS AND MANY OTHERS HAVE CONCEDED TO ARABS. JAPAN WAS ABOUT TO ANNOUNCE ITS POSITION IN A WAY TO PROTECT ITS OIL SUPPLIES. IF BIG POWERS COULD NOT RESIST, HOW COULD KOREA, HE ASKED. A CUT IN OIL SUPPLIES BY SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT WOULD BE TOTALLY DISASTROUS FOR KOREA. UNLESS U.S. COULD GUARANTEE CRUDE SUPPLIES FROM ITS OWN SOURCES, THERE WAS NOTHING KOREA COULD DO BUT SEEK TO ASSURE ITS REQUIREMENTS UNDER BEST CONDITIONS POSSIBLE.

3. THEREFORE, ROKG IS INSTRUCTING ITS AMBASSADORS NOVEMBER 22 TO INFORM SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT THAT ROK POSITION ON ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUES IS QUOTE SIMILAR TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY UNQUOTE. ROKG CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SEOUL 07866 220507Z

WOULD TRY TO CONFINE ITS STATEMENTS TO SAME PHRASING USED BY EC AND WOULD SEEK TO AVOID ANY THREATS REGARDING ITS RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL OR ANY WORDS DAMAGING TO THOSE RELATIONS. IN ADDITION, SAUDIS AND KUWAITIS WOULD BE OFFERED AN ASSURED FLOW OF KOREAN

CEMENT, THAT BEING A COMMODITY WHICH IS ALSO IN SHORT SUPPLY AND WHICH ARABS HAVE BEEN SEEKING.

4. YUN WAS HOPEFUL THAT THIS APPROACH WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL BUT LEFT IMPRESSION THAT ROKG WOULD GO AS FAR AS NECESSARY TO ASSURE OIL SUPPLIES. HE REFERRED TO UNSTINTING SUPPORT GIVEN ARABS BY NORTH KOREA, INCLUDING MILITARY IN EGYPT AND SYRIA, AND THE DIFFICULTY THIS CREATED FOR SOUTH. HE SAID ROKG REALIZED STEPS THEY WERE TAKING WERE NOT WHAT U.S. DESIRED, BUT ASKED FOR OUR QUOTE UNDERSTANDING UNQUOTE.

5. COMMENT: IN CONVERSATION WITH YUN, AND IN PREVIOUS CONVERSATION ON SAME SUBJECT WITH MINISTER OF COMMERCE, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT KOREAN FEAR OF OIL CUT-OFF IS SO GREAT, THAT ASSURANCE OF SUPPLY IS OVER-RIDING THOUGHT IN THEIR MINDS. THEY WILL TRY TO BARGAIN WITH THE TWO ARAB STATES ON WHOM THEY DEPEND AND WITH WHOM THEY HAVE GOOD RELATIONS, BUT IN END WILL GIVE IN IF REQUIRED. KOREANS WOULD CONSIDER THEIR STATEMENTS ONLY WORDS ON PAPER, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY FORUM, SUCH AS UN, WHERE THEY WOULD BE PUT TO THE TEST OF A VOTE. THEY REGRET GOING AGAINST OUR PREFERENCE, BUT SEE THEMSELVES AS TOO SMALL AND TOO VULNERABLE TO TAKE A STAND THAT COULD BE SO COSTLY TO THEM.

HABIB

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